

RECKLESS RALPH'S

DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation, and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries, and popular story papers. Published by Ralph F. Cummings, Box 75, Fisherville, Mass., U.S.A. Price \$1.00 per year, or ten cents a copy.

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NONAME

By Leornard C. Leighter

Noname, otherwise known as Lu Senarens in his right name, started his career when a youngster of fourteen, by writing poems and jokes, etc.. Noname, behind that cryptic signature, and some twenty or so other names, pen names in the days gone by, has been content to efface himself for nearly forty years of continuous writing, yet to this otherwise modest man, belongs the unique distinction of having written and seen published, between fifty and sixty million words. Just think of it ! More than the biggest part of any of the writers of that time. At first thought, it seems as impossible as the things of which he wrote, such as diving boats, flying boats, horseless cars, odd looking aircraft, balloons, and many other queer things of fifty years ago. But the story of Lu Senarens' career shows the possibility of doing the impossible, and withal, he was so young-looking, that to speak of fifty years ago, in connection with him, seems absurd. And to think that he's the writer of a thousand thrillers !

He began his career, when most boys are playing ball, and other sports. While he was still in college, he became an author in

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good standing and in earnest, selling adventure and sea stories to the Nickol Library, then at Chicago. He received twenty-five dollars apiece at that time. Soon after, he became first editor of the "Brooklyn Blade", famous at the time. In 1881 he wrote a long serial "The Island Treasure", long before Stevenson published "Treasure Island", and sold it to one of Frank Yousey's Weeklies; and from then on, for twenty years or more, he continued to write for the various publications of this firm, such as short stories, serials, novelettes, etc., at the rate of ten thousand words a day. To the writer who taps off a couple of thousand words on his typewriter, he considers he has done a days work, and the more mechanical labor of forming ten thousand words with a steel pen, seems paralyzing. But Lu Senaron's ingenuity was confined to inventing devices for fiction heroes. He discovered that by placing a piece of velvet under his wrist watch, that the friction of his hand moving across it, would generate enough electricity to keep the muscles flexible and prevent writer's cramp. So, he turned out millions of pages of fine, almost microscopic, writing, which however, was so legible that no typesetter ever complained. Some of the most famous of his many tales, are probably those dealing with the adventures of Old and Young King Brady, issued in the "Secret Service" Library, under the signature of "Police Captain Howard". He wrote many great detective stories, too. The adventures and inventions of Frank Reade, and Jack Wright stories, two of the Noname series, were his best work. For twenty years, one of these stories, averaging forty thousand words in length, appeared every week. Long before the days of modern submarines, automobiles, steam men and horses, and ships that fly

through the air sustained by stationary wings--the very principle later adopted, or by intricate rotascope arrangements with a driving wheel behind, and a helix to lift them into the air. In one of the Jack Wright stories, published in 1895, more than a quarter century ago, has a description of a flying machine, called the "Albatross", which might, almost without change, be applied to the latest type of airplane of that time. In another one of the series, "Jack Wright's Electric Dipper", Mr. Senarens anticipated the invention of the battle tanks, by some scores of years. So utterly unheard of, were these mechanical devices, that the artist illustrating the stories, was at a loss until the author sketched his ideas for a working plan. There also is a picture, the cover of "Jack Wright and his Electric Under-Boat", published nearly thirty years ago--which would answer very well for cross section of an up-to-date modern submarine. It was not only the artist who could not picture Lu Senaren's inventions. His publishers received many letters from skeptical readers, imploring them "not to print such absolutely impossible and crazy things," but the creator of these impossibilities, has lived to see them all come true, and to ride in his own "Overland Injun". His method of work, was to submit lists of catchy titles to the editor, and then seek out a plot for the ones that were chosen. First of all, he would find a location, by preference an odd and unusual place; then he would read everything he could find relating to that country, its customs, and the people in it. Perhaps a volcano or a hidden city, in which to drop a Flying machine. At one time, the title, "From Pole to Pole" was given him. At first sight it seemed to be an airship story;

but by chance he picked up a magazine and read a scientific article by Lieutenant Symmes, entitled, "Symmes Holes", seriously advancing the theory that there was a hole through the earth, through which the ocean currents rushed, thus causing the phenomenon of the tides. Lu Senarens seized joyfully upon this theory, and sent his heroes from Pole to Pole in a submarine, through the center of the earth ! There is no doubt that Lu Senarens would have made his name famous if he had not concealed it behind anonymity.

In his tales, are passages of striking beauty and imaginative power, that rival Jules Verne at his best, among them, a description of the silent world, fathoms under the ocean, where dense forests of giant trees waved their feathery tops far above the heads of the explorers; where meadows of vivid green grass dotted with sea blooms of strange brilliancy stretched before their gaze; and mountains and valleys and stoneless deserts of dazzling white sand, passed beneath their undersea craft. Of course, Lu Senarens was a reader of science. From a study of the flight of birds, he derived the principles of the dozens of different aircraft he invented; astronomy and geology furnished sound bases for many of his weirdest tales, and he followed Madison's work with breathless interest. He modestly disclaims any great literary style, and says his purpose in writing was not so much to make a reputation for himself, but to educate his readers, and to give them good sound scientific material, as well as an interesting tale. But at a time when the "blood-and-thunder" type of story was so popular, it is not a small claim to distinction, that among the many hundreds of tales that came from his pen, there should not be

one that is not clean and wholesome, as well⁵ as amazingly ingenious and imaginative. Lu Senarens has written as many of the stories, such as sea and war stories, detective, Scientific, adventure, sporting stories, war and love stories, and stories of boy's schools, that have been sold and read in every corner of the world, from China and Japan, to South America.

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THE HARRISON KEITH STORIES

By J. Edward Leithhead

There were fifty-one Harrison Keith detective stories, all published in Street and Smith's 15-cent New Magnet Library. The first one, "Adventures of Harrison Keith, Detective", was No. 93 of the Library. Then there was a lapse of years, when the series was taken up again in earnest. It began with No. 489 of New Magnet, "Harrison Keith, Sleuth." But this was not an original story; it contained reprints from Nick Carter Weekly Nos.: 463, "The Millionaire Cracksman"-and 464, "The Mystery Man". Nick was Harrison Keith-Chick was Dick Rogers-Patsy was Mike Donovan-Ten Ichi was Hans Brinkerman, assistants to Keith..The 49 Keith volumes which followed, interspersed with Nick Carters and stories about other detectives, were all new as far as I know, the authors being Frederick W. Davis-W. Bert Foster, and George C. Jenks.

One of the early Magnet "Nick Carters"-No. 238, "The Claws of the Tiger", contained reprints from the Shield Weekly, Sheridan Keene being transformed into Nick Carter. New Magnet No. 884, "The Door of Doubt", was made up of reprints from Old Broadbrim Weekly, Nick taking the place of the old Quaker detective. The latter were evidently intended to rival Old King Brady of "Secret Service". Possibly other Shield and Broadbrim Weeklies were used in the makeup of New Magnet "Nick

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Carters". Old Broadbrim and Young Broadbrim were not separate weeklies, but one and the same, the title merely changing with No. 52, "Young Broadbrim, the Boy Detective, or, The Old Quaker's Youthful Ally", when Young Broadbrim's exploits were featured.

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MEMBERS OF THE H.H. BROTHERHOOD

(If you ferret them out)

By Robert M. Smeltzer.

Once 'pon a time a man named Beadle conceived the bright idea, it would enhance his reputation, not to say anything of his exchequer, if he would bring out a series of "he-man" stuff for the boys in blue and the boys in grey to read while resting up between shots; as, parads, that was during our Civil War time. From that time on, until perhaps a decade or so ago, Dime Novels came into the world, flourished from the start, and made their publishers wealthy; at least until the decline set in.

However, this tale is to henceforth, through the medium of this tale, present, in the telling, the NAMES of many members of our Brotherhood, and now--it's yours, to do or die! What are the names?

A friend of mine is always looking at the ground, in the hope he may some time pick up a twenty spot; this day, as he stopped, he brought up a medallion; then an expression of disappointment, aw's tin, sed he; then we treked down the street and knocked on the door of a friend. At the bek and nod, we entered. My pard advised the man to burn sulphur to fumigate his house, as he said a Frenchman had told him this was fine for that purpose. But our host expostulated, saying; "Dont that smell, sir?" "Well," he replied, "I know a blacksmith who tried it out and was perfectly satisfied."

Our host was a miller and he was John's son, but he could make French fries as good as any woman. And, while there were nice homes around, his was the best. We played ball, and getting tired and heated, we asked for a drink, and he proudly assured us that he had a cold well. No reason why it should not be so, for it was down in the marsh. 7

There had been a rain and we fought hard in order to get back to the house; but it was still daylight. Heading for the house, we ran into a friend of mine, Mull; hauled coal for my father years ago; a good friend of mine, you bet. Come to think of it, he never brought more than a single ton at a time. In his youth, he was a sawyer and in those days, a raw son, if there ever was one.

When we were about to leave, it seemed my two friends would put thru a horse deal, but our host declined, saying; "If you add a mare, O.K."

So, 'bout this time, I ran from Dal to Nick of the Woods, giving him a lily. An elderly man said, "Pears son, as tho the heat has got yeh!"

I replied; "I'll grant that to yuh, without guile, sure thank yuh". Then he begin patten me on the back, and remembering him as being a fine tanner in the years ago, I said to my pal:

"Come, hold up our benners, and let's go home."

My friend's Par, Ma were both glad when we turned into the gate.

NOTE: Bob offers a perfect Boodle's Dime Library for the best solution. Thar's lots of names "up thar"; ferret them out and have a lot of fun, and mobbe win the Prize.

ROBERT E. SMELTZER

3432 N. Bodine Street, Philadelphia, Pa.
In case of tie-earliest postmark wins out.

AMONG THE ADVERTISERS.

While this is a REPRINT-among the advertisers in the original of this issue, we found that:

KOWALCZYK BROS. of Worcester, wanted Old Books-Americana-and Autographs in Quantities.

A.J.MARKS of Toledo offered a variety for trade (Revolutionary-Civil War-History-Fiction-Poetry-and many pamphlets-for Cash or FOR;a variety of wants, too numerous to mention in a reprint, 30 years after.

RUTH VINSON was seeking "Belle Starr, the Bandit Queen". Ruth lived in Little Rock.

M.E.MARSH of Ithaca, N.Y. was looking for Perfect copies of Happy Days-Tip Top Weekly-and other novels.

J.P.GUINON of Little Rock offered \$100.00 Cash for first 40 issues of Tip Top, in good shape with original covers, and to pay in proportion for single issues between 1-40.

M.E.MARSH of Ithaca N.Y. had a very interesting offer of Gummed Stickers.

Rockless RALPH CUMMINGS announced his Standard Dime and Nickel Novel Catalogue of Old Weeklies-Novels and Story Papers of America for 1937, at \$1.00 per copy, and his New Address:

RALPH F. CUMMINGS.

Fisherville,

Massachusetts.

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